

have 32 pending judicial nominations as well. Ultimately, once we figure out some way to allow these nominations to be considered, I am confident that most, or many, are going to receive unanimous votes if this body is just given the opportunity to vote.

I guess my point is, as I look at the 8 nominations and the 32 nominations, I urge my colleagues not to take this sort of blanket or scorched earth policy of not letting anybody through at all. We need to be reasonable and we need to work together on these nominations. If there is a concern, and if there are certain nominations that are not being considered, there are a lot of different ways we can get attention to those individuals. But this sort of blanket holding things back is something we need to address.

I hope the nominations, many of which are probably cleared on both sides, are not held hostage by a few. On this side of the aisle, we are prepared to consider the ambassadors, we are prepared to consider the judges, and we are prepared to vote on the chairmen of a whole range of committees, such as the Consumer Products Safety Commission, HUD nominations, and the list goes on. It is time for good faith and it is time to do our constitutional duty. These nominations are sent to us to be voted upon.

ABUSE OF IRAQI PRISONERS

Mr. FRIST. Mr. President, I want to also mention that yesterday the Senate Armed Services Committee held a day-long hearing to learn more about the abuse of the Iraqi prisoners at the Abu Ghraib prison. Many of us did not see all of the testimony, but we were able to review it over the course of the day. The committee received detailed testimony from Major General Antonio Taguba, the senior officer who investigated and reported on the Abu Ghraib prison abuses, and from a range of other Defense Department officials.

Today, the Intelligence Committee will be holding a closed hearing to explore matters under their jurisdiction related to these incidents. As we know, both committees met last week in a similar fashion. This afternoon, from 2 to approximately 5 o'clock, in S. 407, there will be an opportunity for all Senators to review photographs and evidence related to the prisoner abuse scandal. We will have the opportunity to view them. They will be there from 2 p.m. to 5 p.m. in S-407, after which they will be returned.

As I stated yesterday, it is our expectation that the Senate will be apprised of the ongoing investigations being conducted by the Department of Defense and of all the actions being taken to ensure these incidents never occur again.

To that end, I simply wish to reflect my perspective that the Defense Department has been very responsive to our requests. Secretary Rumsfeld, General Myers, and their senior aides have

updated us as events have unfolded, and they have been attentive to the Senate's requests and to their needs.

As the President said the other day, Secretary Rumsfeld—I agree with the President—has done a superb job as Secretary of Defense in very trying and challenging times. I am confident he is taking action to address these deplorable acts in a deliberate manner, in a transparent manner, and is taking all measures to ensure that these acts will never occur again.

EXTENDING CONDOLENCES TO THE FAMILY OF NICHOLAS BERG

Mr. FRIST. Mr. President, I wish to extend my condolences to the family of Nicholas Berg who, as we all know, was murdered yesterday in Iraq by kidnappers. We grieve for him, and we grieve for his family.

At the same time, the actions of his murderers are a reminder to us of what all our soldiers on a daily basis are undergoing. We must endeavor to bring these terrorists to justice as we work to bring democracy, peace, and the rule of law to Iraq.

Let us keep in mind all of this in the days and weeks ahead, which will be very challenging times for us all.

PASSAGE OF FSC/ETI

Mr. FRIST. Mr. President, I wish to comment, because I did not have the opportunity last night, on the FSC/ETI JOBS bill that was passed last night after a long time on the floor and after a number of amendments, an approximately equal number considered from the Republican and Democratic side. It is a real achievement for this body. It was passed, and it is critical to accelerating jobs and production of jobs in this country.

The bill we passed will bring our trade and tax laws into compliance with our trade agreements finally. As many of my colleagues know, the Europeans are already imposing tariffs on our exports. That Euro tax started in March at 5 percent, and until we act—we have acted in the Senate, and now the House must act, but we must act as a Congress—these will increase 1 percent each month if we do not act.

I do want to mention the energy provisions that are part of this bill that were added on the Senate floor—too many for me to refer to now but provisions such as tax credits for the production of electricity from renewable sources, such as wind and solar. It contains tax incentives to promote the production and use of alternative fuels motor vehicles using natural gas. It includes added incentives to promote the use of clean coal and advanced clean coal technology. There are important incentives to increase the supply of natural gas, and the list goes on.

The Senate has acted, and I look forward to the House passing its version of this legislation so that the House and Senate can go to conference and we

can produce a conference bill without much delay and bring it back to the Senate.

There is a lot going on in the Senate both on and off the floor. I appreciate the cooperation of my colleagues as we move America forward.

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. The Democratic leader is recognized.

AMBASSADORIAL NOMINATIONS

Mr. DASCHLE. Mr. President, this morning the distinguished majority leader made some comments regarding ambassadorial nominations. This is an important issue, and I thought I would take a minute to talk about it and respond to some of the concerns we heard expressed on the floor over the last several days.

Last Thursday, I was pleased the Senate confirmed 20 ambassadors, including Ambassador Negroponte for the tough assignment in Iraq after June 30. I note Ambassador Negroponte's nomination was completed with near record speed, given that he was confirmed 1 week after he was nominated by the President. The other 19 ambassadors were confirmed less than a week after they were reported out of the Foreign Relations Committee.

By confirming those 19, the Senate filled three vacant U.S. Embassies. We had hoped to confirm other career Foreign Service officers for the vacancies that exist, including the Embassy in Nepal, which has been the site of some considerable violence over the last several months. Unfortunately, I am told there is still an objection to his confirmation from the Republican side, meaning the Embassy will continue to be vacant for the foreseeable future.

At the moment, I am told the State Department has nearly 170 Embassies around the world. Eight are currently vacant, meaning they have no confirmed ambassador. Of those eight, the President has chosen not to fill two of them, and two are currently too dangerous to fill. One is awaiting action in the Foreign Relations Committee, and the Republicans are objecting to another. The last two, in Sweden and Finland, are vacant because the political appointees who previously served in those posts did not serve out the terms they were committed to serve.

Last week, several of our Republican friends noted that the vacancies send a negative signal to these countries. I hope the President will move with dispatch to fill these vacancies as soon as possible. I also hope the President will work with us to address another problem: Ambassadors pulled out of the duties for which they were confirmed so that they can assume assignments in or related to Iraq.

Here are three examples. Our Ambassador to the Philippines has not been in Manila for the last several months, even though that country, which is hosting American forces that are training Filipino forces, just went through a